

LETTERS

Audacious Exploitation: We've Done It Before

Dear Sir:

While I rarely respond to the numerous letters to the editor that my infrequent contributions to *ARMOR* seem to elicit, I feel compelled to answer LTC O.T. Edwards' letter in the July-August issue. It seems to me that he has failed to see the forest for the trees. This in no way detracts from his professional abilities; it just serves to highlight that this is indeed an area towards which we as an Army should devote some attention.

LTC Edwards provided us with a litany of admirable goals for the regular rotations to the CTCs. Nobody argues with his points, least of all me. But apparently what he has missed was the fact that in content, my article, "Training for Maneuver," encompassed all of his points about what CTC rotations "are about." In my article, in the very first paragraph, I stated that "the number one skill which our tactical echelons must perfect is how to destroy the enemy." Given that, how does one arrive at the conclusion that I am not in favor of "training for the tactical fight" or "training for the present" or "learning hard lessons?"

Moreover, somehow LTC Edwards got the impression that I advocated some sort of futuristic field of battle upon which these concepts should be employed. Far from it. In fact, had he only reviewed the skimpy footnotes which accompanied my article he would find no visionary, pie-in-the-sky theoretical sources, instead he might have realized that I was referring backwards, towards Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and the historical precedent of our own 4th AD in World War II. I assure you, LTC Edwards, when MG "P" Wood drove the 4th AD hell-for-leather across France...OUT-NUMBERED...that he had not previously been "training units to fight on a digitized tactical battlefield that is still at best years away from reality." I am afraid that then-LTC Abrams and MG Woods had never heard of digitization. I am unclear on how you drew the conclusion that I was referring to the future, when the sole example that I provided was from 53 years in the past, but I assure you, what I suggest is possible today.

Next, lest it be forgotten, I will state it a THIRD time. I agree that the CTCs are about training to DESTROY at the tactical level. I am NOT advocating 100% "Free Play." What I do suggest is that in perhaps one scenario in five, perhaps just one in an entire rotation, at LEAST provide the **potential** that the bn/sqdn/bde/regt commander might exploit maneuver warfare. As an infantryman, I can assure LTC Edwards that I am no great fan of what he calls, "free wheeling cavalry charges." However, his assertion that we never do it is patently false. What else would he call the breakout from Normandy (which I cited in the article), or much of the attack (at the tactical level) across Iraq, (which I did not cite)? It would appear to me that indeed we

do execute "charges across the desert," often **without** the benefit of "perfect intelligence." That sir, is called "exploitation," and I contend that it is just about one of the most difficult missions to accomplish. Therefore, we should train for this mission. Currently we do not. You are not suggesting that we **not** train for a difficult mission, are you?

Finally, LTC Edwards suggests that I have advocated training LTCs and COLs on "operational art." Lest we all forget, "operational art" is tied to the operational level of conflict, which, according to FM 100-5 begins (usually) at the corps and above. He is mistaken. I am suggesting training LTCs and COLs, and most especially their staffs and units, on TACTICAL MANEUVER, not "operational art." One thing does worry me, though. He suggests that we have "other tools to do that" (train), such as computer simulations and classroom instruction at Fort Leavenworth, and that I and my fellow company-grade officers should "rest assured" that the LTCs and COLs will "gladly opt to hit the enemy's rear and flank." But then he follows that with "if, if, if...." That, sir, is EXACTLY what I am talking about. "if, if, if...." is the litany of the timid. Computer simulations do NOT create audacious leaders, training at the CTCs has the potential. WE SHOULD TRAIN TO CREATE AUDACIOUS LEADERS. Currently we are training to create efficient set-piece fighters, and this is good. We **must** have the ability to win in the close-in fight. But we are **not** training, at all, at any echelon, to be "audacious." Therefore, I suggest that my modest proposal that perhaps one in four or five scenarios at least provide the **potential** for this type of behavior is not at all out of line with our past and current doctrine and capability, let alone that of the future.

GARRY OWEN,

ROBERT L. BATEMAN
CPT, IN

An Author's Update

Dear Sir:

Since its development and publication in the September-October 1997 issue of *ARMOR*, some of the information contained in my article, "The Russian T-90S: Coming into Focus," has changed. The well-publicized sale of 320 Ukrainian T-80UD MBTs to Pakistan may be dead in the water. According to a variety of open sources, a total of only 35 T-80UDs were delivered to Pakistan in two separate batches in March and May 1997. These 35 tanks were reportedly drawn from Ukrainian Army stocks and had capabilities below the level agreed to by the two countries. According to Moscow's *Kommersant Daily*, this apparently caused the Pakistani government to cancel the sale.

The Russian government has been publicly against this sale from the very beginning, and

has repeatedly refused to supply Ukraine with critical components needed to build the T-80UDs. According to one source, while the more modern Ukrainian T-84 MBT is "80% Ukrainian-made," the T-80UD is "a largely Russian product." According to the Pakistani newspaper *The Hindu*, Pakistan has been assured by Ukraine that the contract for the T-80UDs would be honored in spite of pressure and lack of support from Russia. The remaining piece to this puzzle is the level of importance the Russians put on the supply of defense-related products to Ukraine. If it is determined that the Ukrainian market is important enough to Russian arms suppliers, maybe "quiet" support would still be possible. Without Russian support, its likely that the only T-80UDs to be seen in Pakistan will be those few already paraded through Islamabad.

JAMES M. WARFORD
Leavenworth, Kan.

Correction

Dear Sir:

I was using the spreadsheet (Road March Table) on page 9 of the September-October issue of *ARMOR* Magazine and noticed an error in one of the formulas.

The formula for CP Arrival Time {for cell G10} should be:

= IF(\$B10="", (F10+G\$8/\$B\$4/60), "")

The correction is the insertion of a parenthesis between the comma and F10 to complete the formula. Just thought you and your other readers would want to know.

SGT JOHN SILBER
Schweinfurt, Germany

Maneuver Warfare: "Not Just Moving Around"

Dear Sir:

In his Jan-Feb 97 *ARMOR* article, "Training for Maneuver," Captain Bateman asks whether the U.S. Army embraces the techniques of maneuver warfare. However he does not actually answer the question, and concludes only that what he regards as maneuver warfare is not taught in training centers. And I think the question itself ought to be considered fully, for voices are now asserting that not only Army but Marine Corps doctrines are straying from and discarding maneuver warfare. A corollary question is whether the U.S. Army did, in fact, employ maneuver warfare techniques at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels, as set forth in FM 100-5 and other related doctrinal statements, in the Gulf War. In the opinions of not a few commentators, Operation Desert Storm was conducted more like a firepower slugfest than anything else, with "maneuver" most

often utilized to move and concentrate firepower directly upon the enemy to wear him down, which is not a manifestation of the maneuver of maneuver warfare.

It would certainly be revealing for the two questions I've posed to be analyzed and answered by persons deeply familiar with both U.S. Army doctrine and how Desert Storm was actually fought. Of course, doctrine is not dogma, and commanders should be permitted individual judgment, but there seems no point in developing and setting forth doctrine if it is cast aside and ignored as a source of guidelines in actual combat.

I expect an indignant, "But 'twas a famous victory!" objection to the suggestion that perhaps victory is not an automatic insulation from analyses which might suggest inadequacies, shortcomings, or more appropriate alternatives. But can learning take place without questions?

I understand that military analyst Steven Canby suggested the alternative approach to liberating Kuwait — shifting the Schwerpunkt to the Medina-Baghdad road and driving north to lever the Iraqis out. Was Canby's idea feasible? Reasonably derived from, and compatible with, Army doctrine? Ever seriously considered?

Returning to the text of Bateman's article, I disagree with his contention, "Simply stated, 'maneuver warfare' is the embodiment of Sun Tzu's... maxim that the essence of generalship is... to win the war having never had to fight a battle." And extrapolating from his Sun Tzu citation, Bateman goes on to describe maneuver warfare as "warfare that emphasizes avoidance of contact at any level in favor of positioning." I think Bateman's statements lead to the common misunderstanding that maneuver warfare means basically winning by just moving around. From the beginning of the maneuver warfare debate, people have seen the first word of "maneuver warfare," thought of movement, and misperceived maneuver warfare as essentially just moving around. I think Captain Bateman has been so influenced, given the titling of his article — "Training for Maneuver," rather than "Training for Maneuver Warfare." Actually, maneuver warfare involves both movement and firepower, and is more than flank attacks. It is not in contradiction of, or incompatible with, firepower or with hard fighting, and would in fact often involve hard fighting, and inflicting some attrition upon the enemy, though not winning through attrition.

Ideas more relevant to maneuver warfare from 500 B.C. Chinese military thinker Sun Tzu's *Art of War* are that movements should be like water, avoiding strong points and seeking weak points, and that one should know where and when to fight and not to fight.

Sun Tzu's statement about achieving goals without fighting appears to have been made regarding avoiding a war altogether, through strategic and grand strategy which balk the enemy's plans, rather than by actually having a war and not fighting in it.

Deeper into his article Bateman does demonstrate an appreciation of hitting the en-

emy's field trains, rear areas, his logistical underbelly, and his air defense. And he objects to the training center approach of "setting out to destroy the enemy's main body" in a "struggle to determine the strongest." Perhaps this emphasis derives from readily accepting the Clausewitzian stress on battles of mass v. mass.

JOSEPH FORBES
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Battleship Analogy Doesn't Apply to Tanks

Dear Sir:

I find Stanley C. Crist's article, "The M1A2 Abrams: The Last Main Battle Tank?," to be remarkably misinformed.

Mr. Crist argues for the missile to replace the tank gun so that the armor community will not "stay on the same dead-end street that doomed the battleship to oblivion." NOT SO!

First, the analogy is not there, i.e., ships to tanks. Second, what all combined arms combatants know is that you need a mix of both chemical energy and kinetic energy warheads on the battlefield to ensure the enemy cannot countermeasure you out of lethality. Third, there is still huge growth potential in guns and ammunition, both conventional, as represented by the XM291 long barrel 120/140 and, eventually, electro-magnetic or electro-thermal weapons. Guns and bullets provide the larger number of stowed kills needed in intense close combat that missiles can never equal, not to mention firing time differences.

How about the M1A3 Abrams, "The Next Main Battle Tank?"

D.S. PIHL
Lieutenant General
U.S. Army (Retired)

M113 Solution Wouldn't Protect The Gunner in a Firefight

Dear Sir:

The only flaw I see in Mr. Crist's advocacy of an M113 with a 106mm RCLR is the fact that the gun can't be fired from under armor. It is easy to picture an M113 in a duel with a machine gun bunker with the gunner pinned inside the vehicle. If you can't fire from under cover, the advantages of the rest of the armor are minimized.

The inability of air-dropping the M1 is only the beginning of the logistics difficulty. It weighs so much that it requires almost an entire C5 sortie per tank. This huge amount of airlift is unlikely to be used to bring more than a small handful of M1s to support the whole division.

Another possibility would be an ITV, which would be aided in this role by the development of an HE warhead for the TOW2. I am, however completely unsure whether this vehicle could be air-dropped.

Like the cancellation of the DIVAD, losing the XM8 does not get rid of the mission. I guess the fact that so much thought and ink is going into the debate over the weapons to equip the 3/73 is a measure of everyone's satisfaction with the M1 series in the heavy divisions.

JAMES AGENBROAD
Technical Information Specialist
U.S. Army Research Laboratory

His Experience Contradicts Criticisms of Guard Units

Dear Sir:

CPT Michael Kelly's letter to the editor in the July-August 1997 issue of *ARMOR* was simply disgusting and unprofessional. His insulting remarks about National Guard officers and the National Guard armor community may accurately reflect his personal bitterness with "the system," but they are far from reality. My 17 years of service in Cavalry and Armor have been split almost 50/50 between active duty service and the National Guard in two different states. I served as a cavalry troop commander twice in one of the highest profile active duty cavalry units (11th ACR) and am now commanding a National Guard tank battalion. I have had the opportunity to see both active and reserve component armor units from the inside.

The days of the stereotypical National Guard officer **are over**. With the implementation of a requirement of federal recognition for promotion, and the recent implementation of ROPMA, the "good old boy" promotion track in the Guard is a distant memory. All Guard officers are required to meet active duty standards for civilian and military schooling, height and weight, and physical fitness for promotion and command positions. The officers in my Guard battalion are every bit as dedicated, physically fit (yes, I said physically fit), and educated as officers I served with in the 11th ACR. One of my lieutenants (my scout platoon leader) set an APFT record at Fort Knox during AOB. A team of five of my officers beat some Marine Corps teams in the annual 10 km Obstacle Course/Mud Run at Camp Pendleton. One of my company commanders is a Master Fitness Trainer. All CPTs and above have four year college degrees (most LTs do as well), and there are five officers with postgraduate degrees. Four of the five company commanders are AOAC graduates. These young men are studs, they are educated, and they are leaders.

The only difference between the officer corps in the Guard and the officer corps on active duty is time — time on duty to gain experience, time to train soldiers, and time to plan. However, many of my officers have active duty experience, and I have a number of Vietnam and Desert Storm veterans in the unit. Further, we do have sufficient time to train individual, crew, and platoon tasks to

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standard. On the positive side, time is the precise reason Guard armor units are such a great investment, as a Guard battalion only costs a fraction of the amount to operate an active duty battalion for a year. After mobilization, reserve armor units can come up to par on company and battalion tasks within a short time frame (depending on who you talk to, the range is 40-90 days).

Both active duty and Guard leaders must recognize and accept the role of the other. Our branch of service is far behind the other services, such as the Air Force and USMC, in this mutual recognition and cooperation for the overall good. It is an indisputable fact that we cannot execute our current national strategy of fighting two "nearly simultaneous" regional conflicts without Guard armor and cavalry units. In light of current force structure, we could not fight one regional conflict (on the Desert Storm model) without Guard units. Do you realize we had more soldiers in Saudi Arabia in Desert Storm than we currently have on active duty? Having armor and cavalry units in the Guard is a cost efficient, smart way to provide a force which can follow active component forces into regional conflicts, "beef up" combat power, and provide a strategic reserve. If we do away with Guard armor and cavalry units, we are forcing future CINCs to fight defensively in regional conflicts due to lack of combat power. Further, the armor forces on active duty would likely be parceled out between the two theaters, preventing the concentration of forces necessary to win both campaigns.

In any event, CPT Kelly's letter reflects a lingering "us versus them" attitude which does not do any of us any good. We should focus on important issues, like funding for training, force structure, and modernization of the entire Army (versus the other services and defense appropriations), rather than internal sniping and bickering.

KRIS P. THOMPSON
LTC, Armor, CA ARNG
Commander, 2-185th Armor

History Supports Strong Role Of Guard and Reserve Units

Dear Sir:

Rarely do you hear an ax grind as loudly as that of CPT Michael Kelly in his recent letter (*ARMOR*, Jul-Aug 97). You must understand that any man or woman who will willingly lay aside their civilian pursuits and take up arms to defend our freedom has a special place in the roll call of honor among freedom-loving people of this world. The truth is that the citizen soldier has, and always will be, the backbone of our nation's defense. From Bunker Hill to Bosnia, they have proven their worth.

While I understand some of your frustrations, CPT Kelly, it is at your level that the most significant changes can be made. Take the soldiers in your charge, and train the living hell out of them. Teach them every trick of the trade. Impart to them your hard-won com-

bat experience. Ignore what other, perhaps less qualified, officers do. Do not wait for some "magic bullet" personnel system to reform the Army or the National Guard. Just make your piece of the action the best that it can be.

One day you, as we all must, will dismount at Fiddler's Green. When you do, look around. You will see some familiar faces. Soldiers like Light Horse Harry Lee, William Barrett Travis, LTC Teddy Roosevelt, CPT Bucky O'Neil and millions of other long-forgotten troopers. These were the citizen soldiers who marked the bill "paid in full." While you're there, be sure to stop by the bivouac of the 192d and 194th Tank Battalions. As they proudly show you the combined total of six Presidential Unit Citations earned on Bataan, I want you to see their faces when you tell them that, after all, they are not real tankers. You have a lot to learn, young man.

CHARLES W. TREESE
LTC, USAR (Ret)
Colorado Springs, Colo.

If the Guard is Broken, Stay Around and Fix It

Dear Sir:

I am writing an angry response to CPT Michael A. Kelly, Texas National Guard, who wrote to you concerning the personnel system "driving good people out of the active Army and the Guard. *ARMOR* - July-August 1997, Page 4.

Our Army has gone through a series of ups and downs over the years. We had the great draw-down in forces after World Wars I & II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War. The RIFs (Reductions in Force) during the late 1950s and early 1970s released thousands of quality officers with only 90 days notice. I remember the "zero defect/hollow Army" of the post-Vietnam War, and the Reagan administration's build-up that allowed us to fight Desert Storm. Outstanding armor officers like Generals Abrams, Starry, Saint, Franks, and Doyle (to name only a few) didn't quit! They stayed and worked to fix the Army prior to Desert Storm, as did thousands of other good armor officers.

The armor officer who is worth his salt will recognize problems, hold to the course, and work to make his part of the Army the best that he can make it. It is easy to point fingers and say "the good ol' boys rule the world so, I quit!" It is another matter to stay in your unit, either AC or RC, and do the very best you can to make it the very best in the Armor Corps. If an officer can't do that, we don't need him!

Both the Active Army and the National Guard occasionally have weak leaders in units. We fix those problems as they surface. In both the Active Army and National Guard, you will find strong leaders who lead by example, are technically and tactically competent, and get the job done. To those officers who were "driven out," I say "Good riddance.

I wish I could have been there to give them a ride to the back gate!" The *keepers* in Armor will stay in to take our branch and the Army (AC/RC) forward.

MATT D. MCKNIGHT III
COL, CAV
278th Armored Cavalry Regiment
TN ARNG

TERM-like Munitions Detract From Tanks' Direct Fire Role

Dear Sir:

While the Tank Extended Range Munition (TERM) concept is technically interesting, it is doctrinally flawed. TERM fulfills an artillery, not an armor role. Tanks are built to fight the close, direct-fire battle. They must survive frontal hits and have very lethal, rapid firepower. Ammunition loads, crew size, and numerous other factors are traded off in order to ensure the smallest size practical to reduce exposure and signature while also keeping down weight and maximizing mobility. Tanks are expensive to build and costly to operate, but nothing else can fulfill their role on the battlefield. Why try to make them into artillery, when such already exist?

The TERM technology is readily applicable to existing or developmental mortar, artillery, or missile systems. The tank (and mech infantry) battalion already has a heavy mortar platoon. It has a fully-developed fire control and communication architecture that can be expanded as needed. The platoon is, or can be, fully integrated into the higher level direct and general support artillery assets of the brigade, division, and corps. Regardless of the technical limitations of TERM (mortar, missile, or cannon) armored self-propelled launcher systems could easily be developed. They, too, can be assigned to the tank (and mech infantry) battalion as an organic fire support element.

For study purposes, I suggest modeling the battalion heavy mortar platoon. As variations, consider a turreted mortar; a missile launcher something like ADATS (Air Defense Anti-Tank on an M113 or M2 chassis); and a self-propelled howitzer (based on the 105mm M108 or the 155mm M109 howitzer).

This approach is fully compatible with current doctrine, while taking full advantage of TERM's leap-ahead technology. You will very quickly be able to quantify any combat multiplier effects of TERM without the countless distracters, not the least of which is questioning the fundamental role of the main battle tank.

The obvious debate will be whether you will need as many tanks (and infantry) in a given situation. Should the battalion TERM platoon be expanded into a battery as a trade-off for a tank or mechanized company? Or, should each company trade one tank or mech platoon for a TERM platoon. Or, should a TERM battery or battalion be assigned to the brigade? Whatever, to be determined! The key is to start with a reasonable, doctrinally sound

operational concept, and let the analysis begin.

CHESTER A. KOJRO
LTC, AR, USAR
Rolla, Mo.

Borrowing Marines' TDG Approach Proved a Useful Training Tool

Dear Sir:

I am not sure if my comments should be addressed to you. If not, please forward them to the appropriate address.

I wanted to congratulate *ARMOR* for addressing the use of Tactical Decision Games in the May-June 1997 issue ("The Tactical Decision Game (TDG): An Invaluable Training Tool for Developing Junior Leaders" by CPT James D. Gonsalves, USMC). I participated in a number of TDGs while attending the Marine Amphibious Warfare School in Quantico, Va. They were conducted in both small group and large group environments. Although the instructors attempted to distract us by constantly speaking to us, I did not experience the banging trash cans CPT Gonsalves refers to. After 10 minutes, several students were chosen to present their solutions/FRAGOs. On every occasion, the solutions presented sparked enough debate to fill several hours of class time. The debates were encouraged and proved to be very educational as they raised many options I had not originally considered.

As one of the six Army officers, but the lone Army Armor officer, in my class, I took note of the potential and applicability of these TDGs to training my future lieutenants and platoon sergeants. I am convinced that they can be a valuable tool for leaders willing to invest a small amount of preparation time. As with any training tool/device, it only benefits those who utilize it. In the age of shrinking budgets, this is a quick, inexpensive tool to throw in the CVC bag.

I hope Army leaders, specifically Armor leaders, will not cast aside the ideas presented in CPT Gonsalves' article simply because of his branch of service. The source of these good ideas should be irrelevant. The results of these ideas should be the focus.

The Marines publish one or two TDGs and a couple possible solutions in every issue of their *Marine Corps Gazette*. Many of their junior leaders use those TDGs to train their platoons and squads. Please consider a similar entry for *ARMOR*. A regular TDG section would only improve a great magazine and possibly increase the audience to more junior leaders of all branches.

CPT TODD A. TAMBURINO
Currently Maneuver Officer
G3 Training, 1ID
Wuerzburg, Germany

(See the first in a series of TDGs in our last issue. If there's interest, we'll keep them coming. -Ed.)

An Author Replies

Dear Sir:

In reading Captain Hall's review of *Tank Aces*, I noted his curiosity about the Axis atomic research and the documentation. It was submitted with the manuscript for publication, but was left out because of a production error. This will not be allowed to happen in the future because I'll be using end-of-chapter notes. I am enclosing that information for you to send on to him. The main atomic references are:

Vengeance by Philip Henshall, Sutton Publishers, ISBN 0-7509-0874-2

The German Atomic Bomb, David Irving, DaCapo Press, ISBN 0-306-80198-1

Japan's Secret War, Robert Wilcox, William Morrow & Co., ISBN 0688041884

I have just checked with Barnes & Noble, and all three are available and have extensive bibliographies. The Henshall book, for instance, has full coverage of the V-3/A-10 launch sites. I would also recommend John Hershey's classic, titled *Hiroshima*, for one reason. Directly after the blast, Japanese scientists arrivedwith Geiger counters. They knew exactly what had been done, which fact pretty well proves my contention that there was a nuclear arms race embedded in WWII.

The attitude of *Tank Aces* reflects the feelings of the times. Some of the men mentioned survived the Bataan Death March, and they are not happy about it to this day, nor are the tankers who opened up the V-2 factory and found slaves working on missiles that could reach America.

My book was designed to transfer combat technique from one generation of soldiers to another, and it should not be confused with a formal, scholarly work. It was written for the combat crews and small unit commanders who are going to have to go out and make history in the future. There is an international version in progress, due out late next year, which has even more combat examples. It will be considerably more objective, due to the differing points of view. In addition to American and British, there will be German, Russian, and Japanese tankers and their roles in history.

Thirty-odd years of studying history have shown me that there are avoidable cycles in military affairs, and we seem to be trapped in one of them. The problem of the use of vehicle/infantry teams goes all the way back to the battle of Qadesh. We did not have sufficient infantry in 1968, and Ramses II had the same complaint in 1275 BC. Three and one quarter millennia is a damn long time for one lesson to be ignored, and a problem to be left unsolved. If you don't have skirmishers, some unwashed hostile will cut your harness traces — or put an RPG in your grille doors.

While I note that Captain Hall appreciates my selection of vignettes, he also makes several comments which I would like a chance to answer in print. To set the record straight, many of those vignettes where there is no credit given, were created by me from original

research. Much of the Bataan story, for instance, came from documentation from "Doc" Sartell who was in the 192nd, and who, after an extensive phone interview, shipped me several copies of their newsletter. Most of the two Jima story was told to me by a pair of Marine tankers who fought and lived through it. The amtank story was created in part from phone interviews and from the personal unit history sent to me by Cordell Smith, who wrote it working from his memory, combat diary, and the memories of the rest of the men in those units. That is also how I assembled *Tank Sergeant*, from my own memory.

This is the way I work, and I feel fortunate indeed, to have been able to find those old tankers and swap combat stories with them. My own personal experience is my qualification for doing this kind of work, as well as my extensive study of history. If I were not a professional whose work sells, I would never have been approached for the task by my publisher. Neither Presidio Press, McMullen, Omega, or Simon & Schuster's Pocket Books have ever had cause to complain about my ability to deliver accurate and acceptable manuscripts on schedule and on budget.... And I have been selling my writing since 1981.

RALPH ZUMBRO
Ava, Mo.

Blitzkrieg and "Blatant Myth"

Dear Sir:

MAJ David P. Cavaleri's article, "British Tradition vs. German Innovation," in the March/April *ARMOR*, continues a long tradition of reinforcing popular misconceptions about both armored force developments during the inter-war years and the famed German Blitzkrieg. Based on historical hindsight, the British are continually chided for having failed to realize the full potential of tanks, while the Germans, and particularly General Heinz Guderian, receive full credit for perfect vision of an armored future. The facts are different.

MAJ Cavaleri cites the British leadership's continued belief in the dominance of the infantry-cavalry-artillery combination as if, at that time, it should have been intuitive that tanks would outgrow the infantry support role in which they had been introduced and supplant the cavalry arm. Based on an assessment of their operational performance in World War I, such was not patently obvious in the years immediately following the war. Moving at speeds below 5 miles per hour and extremely vulnerable to both direct fire from larger caliber guns as well as mechanical failure, early tanks were incapable of the cavalry missions of pursuit and exploitation, which required speed and agility. Indeed, the great tank assault at Cambrai was designed only to effect a penetration; cavalry waited in the rear to be passed through to exploit the breach once it had been achieved. Granted, the British probably should have paid closer attention

as the tank's reliability and combat potential grew, but lest one assume the Germans were far ahead, of the *Reichsheer's* ten total divisions, *three* were cavalry, and Guderian's "victory" in introducing tank formations into the German army was by no means the foregone conclusion it seems in hindsight. Had Adolf Hitler not been something of a "technology nut" and had not Guderian finally gotten a superior (General Lutz) who supported his "madness," it is probable the Germans would have followed the same course as Great Britain in failing to realize the tank's true potential. I submit that in the context of the 1920s and 30s — the only context in which the actions of those individuals can properly be judged — the future of tanks was not as obvious as it seems to us in the post-World War II era.

MAJ Cavaleri also falls to expounding on the "doctrine of Blitzkrieg" according to Guderian, a persistent view marred only by the fact that *there was no "Blitzkrieg doctrine," nor were there specific "Blitzkrieg tactics"* (indeed, even the term *Blitzkrieg* was coined by Western journalists, not the Germans). German tactical doctrine evolved in the early- to mid-1920s, while memories of failure in the position warfare of the World War were fresh. Under General Hans von Seeckt's brilliant guidance, the Germans returned to a doctrine of maneuver warfare; fluid tactical operations characterized by decisive concentrations along a narrow front and employing massed firepower to overwhelm the enemy and penetrate or outflank him, exposing his lines of communication to exploitation. *This is the same doctrine with which German forces went to war in September 1939; Reichswehr maneuvers long before the creation of the Panzerwaffe had exhibited adherence to these principles.* It is notable that the Germans did *not* go back and "rewrite" the doctrine following the introduction of the tank, based on the "new technology." (We, on the other hand, are wont to do this, failing to recognize that *doctrine* is not specific to the *technology* with which it is executed. Worse, the U.S. Army now seems intent on acquiring technology and *writing doctrine for it.*) The offense-oriented doctrine the Germans developed was not dependent upon gadgets and gewgaws, and Guderian's genius was not in inventing new doctrine, *because he didn't.* Rather, he was able to integrate tanks into the already-existing doctrine, establishing in the process the irrefutable fact that tanks were a better way to execute decisive tactical offensive operations. The elegance — and subsequently-proved correctness — of German doctrine is a great tribute to those who wrote it *before the Panzerwaffe (Armored Force) ever came into existence.*

The vision of Blitzkrieg recounted by MAJ Cavaleri — a mental picture of massed armor rolling over terrified defenders in a mad dash to the enemy's rear — remains irresistible to any Armor soldier. It is, unfortunately, blatant myth; the observations of untrained observers reporting what they believed to be seeing (mostly journalists, since Germany was at war with most of the Western nations which could have provided competent military observers

to assess the process). Sadly, we continue to believe it, even knowing that such tactics do not work in the "real world"; massed tanks cannot break through fixed defenses. Whether with normal infantry or armor, the Germans attacked in *exactly* the same fashion: following location of an enemy weakness (designated the *Schwerpunkt*) by reconnaissance forces, the location was isolated by fires and obscurants while the *infantry, the only arm capable of seizing and holding terrain*, made and held the initial breach. With the enemy front pierced, follow-on forces were passed through — tanks worked very well, but infantry could — and very often did — do that job. Where the tank came into its own was *past* the breach, in the role cavalry had once played, covering vast distances rapidly to cut off and surround the enemy, disrupt his communications, and destroy his reserves. The combined arms *Panzerdivision* wrapped all the capabilities needed for both the initial breakthrough (armored infantry *Schützenregiment* supported by tanks) and follow-on operations (tanks protected by accompanying armored infantry) into one neat package, supported by responsive artillery and CAS from the *Luftwaffe*. MAJ Cavaleri notes that British neglect had handicapped their armor development, citing as an example the Crusader, weighing just 18 tons, mounting an "ineffective 37mm cannon" and still employing riveted armor. Interestingly, many of the German tanks were markedly worse; the Pzkw. I, many of which were used in the Battle of France, mounted as main armament only *two 7.92mm MGs*. Yet, such tanks proved quite effective in that campaign because they were being used in the role Guderian had envisioned — the traditional cavalry pursuit and exploitation, not the destruction of enemy armor forces. (Rommel's 7th *Panzerdivision*, equipped almost exclusively with captured Czech 38t tanks, got a nasty surprise when it bumped into the Royal Armor Corps near Arras, rapidly discovering that engagement with other tanks was not something necessarily to be sought.) By 1942, the "lightning victories" were over, and issues such as "main gun effectiveness" and armor thickness became crucial as the tank evolved into something for which it had *not* been designed nor envisioned before or during the early stage of the war an *antitank* weapon. For the Germans, the Blitzkrieg phase was over forever.

We must continue to assess current trends and future likelihood against what we know from the past. Unfortunately, the past is of little help — indeed, becomes a *liability* — when we fail to confirm or understand facts and begin making value judgments on glorified historical fiction. Myriad mistakes as well as successes marked the path via which the tank came of age; while I agree with MAJ Cavaleri the issues facing the Armored Force today are *similar* to those of the inter-war years, inaccurate accounts which fail to consider all the factors do not serve us well in assessing today's issues. Lessons from the German, British, French, or even our own contemporary experiences are of little use if not understood in context; the "corporate culture" of those armies was not the same as

that of the U.S. Army on the threshold of the 21st Century, and the concept and purpose of Guderian's *Panzer* force was very different from our current reality. Those who fail to heed the lessons of history may indeed be doomed to repeat its mistakes, but one must *first* accurately understand those lessons before viable conclusions may be drawn.

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Your Duty: Train Soldiers to Survive

Dear Sir:

I was stationed in Germany four years in a Hawk unit as a 16S. I was older than most going in and saw things differently about the way our troops were being handled. Basic training was a joke. The DI's had instructions to run every NoGo back through enough times so their numbers indicated a high success rate. The fact I was not headed to an infantry or an armor unit made our infantry training light at best.

The hardest part of AIT was learning Aircraft Rec on 136 different aircraft from a 5k aspect. I would have liked more than eight hours of hand-to-hand instruction. I would have liked survivability skills to be taught for those who, having fired the last primary weapon, must turn foot soldier.

I remember going to K-town and Baumholder for Stinger trainer use. The troops stationed there had a presence about them as a unit. I would listen to them running PT in the morning and they were thunderous! An American could not hear that power and cadence and not be moved in some fashion. They were a part of the Army I wanted to be in, and wondered why the ADA (and I am sure others) was not like those soldiers. We were not taught to be so; from the start to "our time was up," our motivation was not nearly as high. It would really be sad to think that basic training is that way for all troops. I would ask that all those officers who have a part in the conduct of training to make a special effort to teach the correct way to do things and teach them to survive.

I am out of the Army now, and would hope that we never need to spill the blood of any man. If we do need to raise arms against another country, I would hope the shirt and tie group would let you folks get knee deep and make it quick. I didn't go to the Gulf; the troops from our unit that did go never fired a round but came back all swollen, as if they had done something. The armor, mech inf, air units, and many others are to be awarded thanks from me and my family for doing a darn smooth job of it.

Thanks for listening to the ramblings of an ex-Army person. Keep your powder dry.

PAUL HICKOX
via e-mail